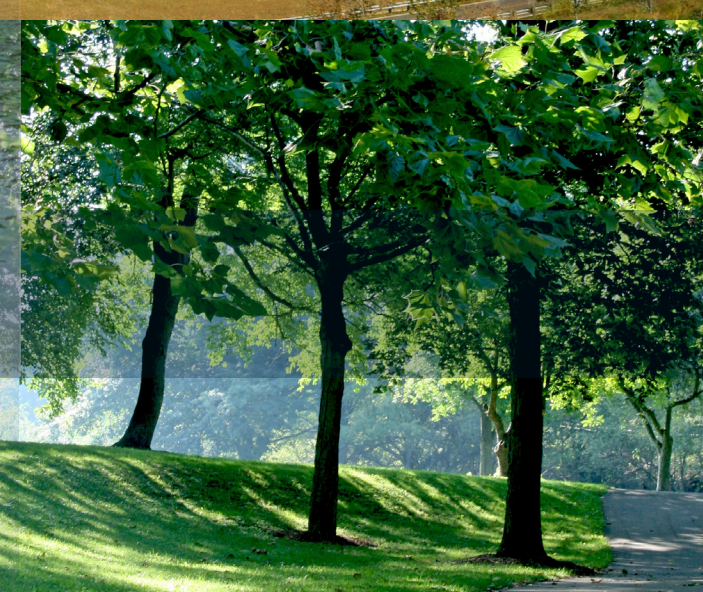




2012

UPPER SCIOTO WATERSHED PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

BALANCED GROWTH PLAN



The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC), 111 Liberty St., Columbus, OH 43215, 614-228-2663, in conjunction with the Upper Scioto Watershed Planning Partnership, prepared this report with funding from the Federal Highway Administration and the Ohio Water Resources Council. The report reflects the views of MORPC and the partnership, which are solely responsible for the content.

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U.S. Department
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**Federal Highway
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Water Resources
Council

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Balanced Growth Initiative:

- Watershed scale planning
- Voluntary
- Incentive-based

The Planning Process:

- Identify issue(s)
- Form Upper Scioto Planning Partnership
- State goal(s)
- Define Priority Areas
- Select and weight criteria for identification of Priority Areas
- Local review of Priority Areas
- Identify implementation tools
- Local adoption of plan
- State endorsement of plan
- Implementation

Recommendations:

- Locally adopt plan
- Develop local comprehensive plan
- Update comprehensive plan every five years
- Incorporate Priority Areas into local community plans and zoning
- Integrate Implementation Tools where applicable and appropriate
- Continue participating in the Upper Scioto Planning Partnership

The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC), an association of local governments in central Ohio, worked with the Upper Scioto Planning Partnership (USPP) to produce this Upper Scioto Watershed Balanced Growth Plan. Balanced Growth is a voluntary, incentive-based planning process designed to protect Ohio's watersheds and facilitate local and regional economic development. The USPP is made up of 29 communities and many watershed stakeholders that voluntarily agreed to direct the development of the Balanced Growth Plan while MORPC provided technical and administrative guidance.

Land use decisions transform and shape our communities in multiple ways. Growth and development are considered positive for many communities. Development can increase a community's tax base and provide employment opportunities for residents. However, growth can become costly over the long term if not carefully planned to maximize the return on infrastructure investments and protect critical environmental areas. The development of open space or farmland results in increased impervious surface coverage from roads and rooftops. This can negatively impact watershed health by causing greater quantities of stormwater runoff. Greenfield development can also place unnecessary financial burdens on communities if it requires substantial extensions of sewer, water, and road networks. In addition to requiring upfront infrastructure investments, the additional miles of roadway and added sewer and water capacity will be increasingly expensive to maintain over time. This plan addresses the following interrelated issues that influence the environmental and economic health of the Upper Scioto Watershed:

Water Quality: The Upper Scioto Watershed is large and drains a very diverse landscape from the most rural farm fields to dense urban environments. As a result, water quality varies from warm water habitat in full attainment to limited resource waters in non-attainment of Clean Water Act standards. The Upper Scioto River and its major tributaries are listed on Ohio's 2010 Section 303(d) list of impaired waters. Agricultural run-off, failing home sewage treatment systems, channel modification, and urban stormwater runoff contribute to water quality impairment of the river and its tributaries.

Growth Management: The Upper Scioto Watershed is expected to experience a population growth of almost 34% by 2035. The areas with the greatest projected growth include the communities surrounding the City of Columbus to the north and the south, the City of Marysville and surrounding townships, and along the U.S. Route 33 corridor that links Columbus and Marysville. Future development in the Upper Scioto Watershed should be planned to minimize harmful impacts to the watershed, minimize the loss of important agricultural or environmentally sensitive areas, and maximize the efficient use of infrastructure.

Need for Regional Collaboration: Land use decisions made in one community will have impacts that are felt in the surrounding area. Natural features like rivers do not follow political boundaries; therefore, it makes sense to take a multi-jurisdictional approach when planning for water quality protection. The same can be said of economic activity where what happens in one community can impact its neighbors. Working together to secure economic competitiveness stands to benefit every community in the region.

Limited Fiscal Resources: There will be increasingly limited fiscal resources to support future development demands. Communities are encouraged to consider the full lifecycle costs of new development, including but not limited to

the costs to extend and maintain services into new areas of the community. Cost savings could also potentially be achieved by partnering with neighboring communities to address shared concerns or provide services.

The USPP has worked to address the aforementioned issues by identifying areas across the watershed that are critical for protection (Priority Conservation Areas), particularly well-suited for development or redevelopment activities (Priority Development Areas), or ideal targets for continued or expanded agricultural use (Priority Agricultural Areas). The Priority Areas were identified using a two step process. First, MORPC identified and mapped potential priority areas based on an analysis of objective criteria selected by the USPP. Following the initial analysis of criteria, each community was asked to review the potential priority areas in their jurisdictions and make adjustments as necessary. Based on this community review, MORPC created Priority Area maps which could continue to be reviewed through the public comment period. Thus, the Priority Area maps in this plan are the result of both a watershed-wide technical analysis and a localized review process. MORPC facilitated partnership discussions during the local review process to encourage consistency and communication between the USPP jurisdictions.

The USPP Balanced Growth Plan also includes a suite of implementation tools to assist communities in their efforts to address the issues facing the Upper Scioto Watershed. This plan recommends that communities utilize these tools where appropriate in an effort to achieve watershed health, economic competitiveness, and agricultural productivity in line with this planning effort and the communities' wishes.

The designation of an area as a Priority Area does not mandate that the area be conserved, developed, or used for agricultural purposes. Incorporation of the Priority Areas into a

community's comprehensive plan or local zoning is recommended but not required. When this plan is finalized, MORPC will work with the USPP and the Ohio Water Resources Council to achieve state endorsement of the Upper Scioto Balanced Growth Plan. State endorsement requires local adoption of the plan by at least 75 percent of the Upper Scioto communities. Upon endorsement, participating USPP communities will be eligible to access state incentives which are designed to promote activities consistent with the designated Priority Areas.

BACKGROUND

Purpose

This Plan is one of five Balanced Growth Plans being developed in contiguous watersheds in central Ohio as part of a voluntary, local response to a state initiative. The Ohio Balanced Growth Initiative was developed to protect and restore Ohio's watersheds. The Balanced Growth Initiative utilizes a watershed-wide approach for developing a plan that reflects local priorities and achieves protection of shared resources. Balanced Growth Plans are intended to complement local watershed action plans that focus on improving and protecting the physical habitat and chemical water quality of

“Balanced Growth is a voluntary, incentive based strategy to protect and restore [Ohio’s watersheds] to assure long-term economic competitiveness, ecological health, and quality of life.”

- Ohio Lake Erie Commission

watersheds and their diverse plant and animal communities.

Stakeholders and community representatives in the Upper Scioto Watershed have worked together to address the interrelated issues of water quality and economic competitiveness by carefully planning and designating Priority Areas that promote conservation efforts in areas that have significant ecological value, (re)development in areas that efficiently utilize and maximize return on existing infrastructure, and continued agricultural practices in the areas that are most valuable for agricultural activity due to historical, cultural, natural or human created traits.

Process

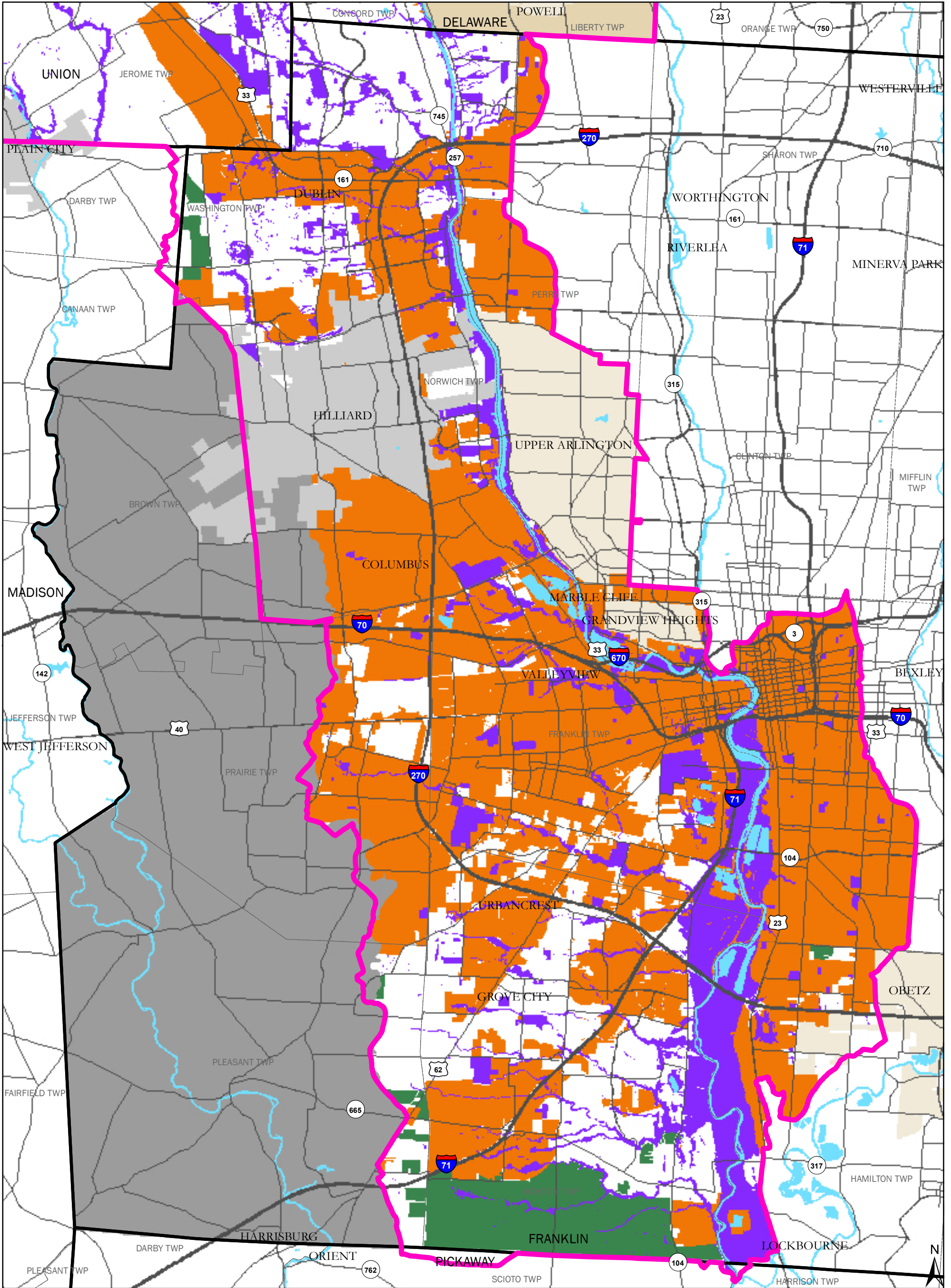
PARTNERSHIP FORMATION AND GOVERNANCE

In 2010, MORPC was awarded a competitive grant from the Ohio Water Resources Council (OWRC) to facilitate the development of a Balanced Growth Plan for the Olentangy Watershed. MORPC leveraged this funding with U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highways Administration Surface Transportation Planning dollars to develop Balanced Growth Plans for four additional central Ohio watersheds, one of which was Upper Scioto. MORPC then organized the Upper Scioto Planning Partnership (USPP) to provide guidance throughout the Balanced Growth Planning process. The USPP, consisting of community representatives and stakeholders, directed the development of this plan while MORPC provided technical assistance, scheduled and facilitated meetings, and developed materials for the partnership.

Each participating community was asked to elect a representative to attend partnership meetings and work with fellow delegates in creating the plan. The representatives were encouraged to share the progress made at the partnership meetings with colleagues and residents of their jurisdictions. Each community





Upper Scioto Balanced Growth Watershed





Franklin County



Balanced Growth Watershed

-  Upper Scioto Analysis Area
-  Priority Agricultural Area
-  Priority Conservation Area
-  Priority Development Area

-  City/ Village Participating in Balanced Growth Partnership
-  Township Participating in Balanced Growth Partnership
-  Not Participating in Balanced Growth Partnership
-  Darby Accord Area

-  Township Boundary
-  County Boundary
-  Major Roads
-  Water

0 1 2 Miles
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The information shown on this map is compiled from various sources made available to us which we believe to be reliable.
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June 2012

Balanced Growth Planning in the Upper Scioto Watershed

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Adapted from the Ohio Balanced Growth Program Frequently Asked Questions (www.balancedgrowth.ohio.gov)

BALANCED GROWTH PLANNING

What is Balanced Growth Planning?

Balanced Growth Planning is a voluntary, incentive-based initiative that brings watershed communities together to develop a strategy that considers the relationship between land use and water quality and promotes long-term economic competitiveness, ecological health, and quality of life. The state offers special incentives for Balanced Growth Planning communities. These incentives can include extra points on grant applications, low-interest loans, and more.

Don't we already have programs to deal with flooding, erosion, and water quality?

Yes, but they deal with correcting past problems. Balanced Growth is intended to prevent future problems by encouraging local governments to plan for the location of (re)development and for areas that should be conserved.

Does this program create unfunded mandates?

No. The program is both voluntary and locally driven and will only occur where local governments decide to participate.

How does Balanced Growth save tax dollars?

Watershed based planning and implementation of Best Local Land Use Practices reduces redundant expenditures for infrastructure and encourages redevelopment in areas where infrastructure already exists. Costs are also reduced by maintaining "green" infrastructure such as forests for filtering rain water and floodplains for mitigating flood hazards.

UPPER SCIOTO PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

Community representatives and stakeholders in the Upper Scioto Watershed worked together to develop the Upper Scioto Watershed Balanced Growth Plan. Early in the planning process, the partnership established goals to guide the development of the plan.

Goals for the Upper Scioto Balanced Growth Plan

Work together as a watershed partnership to achieve common planning goals and to address shared social, economic, and environmental concerns.

- Protect, preserve, restore, and enhance the environment, the Upper Scioto river, open space, recreation areas, and areas that serve natural functions in the watershed. Improve access to these areas.
- Preserve and enhance the unique characteristics of communities within the watershed, whether they are rural, urban, agricultural, suburban, or old town centers.
- Plan for sustainable growth by maximizing efficient use of infrastructure to promote economic development and to achieve a healthy balanced between land uses in the watershed and in the relationship between the natural and built environments.

For more information, visit our website at balancedgrowthplanning.morpc.org

Balanced Growth Planning in the Upper Scioto Watershed

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

PRIORITY AREAS

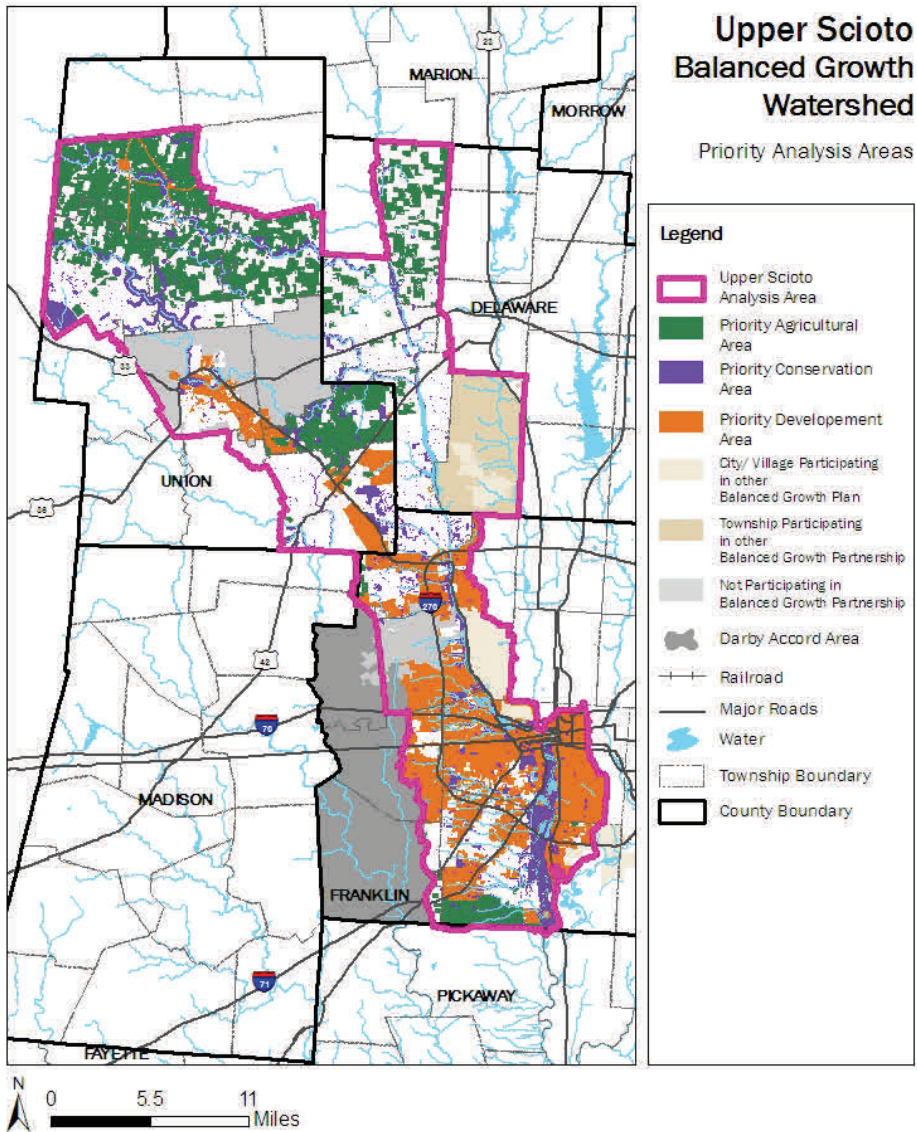
What are Priority Areas?

- Areas that have been locally targeted for conservation, (re)development, or continued agricultural use.
- There is no change in the owner's property rights due to designation as a priority area.

Priority Conservation Area: An area where local communities are encouraged to promote the conservation of land for its unique natural, cultural, recreational or historical value.

Priority Development Area: An area targeted for future development or redevelopment where the local communities will promote use of the land, community services, and existing or planned infrastructure with maximum efficiency while minimizing the impact on the watershed.

Priority Agricultural Area: An area that local communities target for continued, expanded and/or intensified agricultural activities due to historical, cultural, natural, or human-created traits which make it conducive to agriculture and related activities while minimizing the impact on the watershed.



The information shown on this map is compiled from various sources made available to us which we believe to be reliable.
N/AAGIS Center for Energy & Environment, Upper Scioto Watershed BGM Maps for Documents (US_FULL_PriorityMap.mxd)
April 2012

For more information, visit our website at balancedgrowthplanning.morpc.org